CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

FEBRUARY '83 Nº 76

THE DROUGHT REPORT

Drought resistant trees and shrubs.

The Committee has decided to make a Club list of drought resistant plants. Frank Meyer remarked on a particularly healthy wattle planted in the street outside his house, which is growing well despite the drought. He doesn't know what kind it is and will be seeking help in identification.

Members who have, or know of, other plants which are doing well despite the weather, are asked to help with names, or specimens for identification.

Road victims

A feature of the drought which I have noticed is the number of road victims among birds and amimals which seldom are. For instance, Choughs (Black Jays) birds which seldom are seen near the road verge have been hit by cars. I'm not sure what they might have been after.

I've also seen foxes and ravens which have been obviously scavenging, but they are usually far too wary to be caught themselves, but this year I've seen several of both, apparantly hit just trying to get another mouthful. I would have thought there would have been plenty of pickings without them taking risks on the road.

Another thing I noticed was that other scavengers didn't eat the foxes but left them to just dry out on the road. I knew they smelled bad, seems they also taste bad!

Rita Mills

Geological features of the Castlemaine district.... a series.

BIG HILL, CALDER HIGHWAY

The scene photographed here will be familiar to all who travel by road to Bendigo. It was taken just south of the Big Hill cutting, looking east.

The line of trees on the crest of the hill marks the boundary of the metamorphosed sedimentary rock with the Harcourt granite.

The sedimentary rock was laid down under the sea about 500 million years ago. Rocks of this age are called Ordivician rocks. About 400 million years ago, molten rock in the interior of the earth began to intrude into the sedimentary rock. The molten rock solidified to form granite, and baked the sedimentary rock, to make it hard and resistant to erosion. This resistant rock now forms a ridge around the granitic country.

The soil from this baked rock is much poorer, and often much shallower than the granitic soil, and often the native vegetation remains on it. From the air, the boundary between the two types of soil and rock can clearly be seen

Next time that you are (a passenger in a car) going to Bendigo, look for changes in vegetation on either side of the cutting. On which side of the cutting are ironbarks found? How far are red-gums from the ridge? Does the tree line exactly match the geological boundary?

WEEDS OF OUR WATERWAYS NO.4

Controls of Waterweeds

Controlling the weeds by cutting and herbicides is extremely costly and regeneration takes place rather quickly. As the seeds of Water Hyacinth can remain dormant in the dried mud for up to 20 years, it becomes a mamoth task to eradicate it. However the C.S.I.R.O. has engaged in experiments of biological control. Dr Ken Harley at the Long Pocket Laboratories near Brisbane has for several years been introducing insects that attack the weeds. Some have already been released and appear to be causing considerable damage to Water Hyacinth and Alligator Weed.

The C.S.I.R.O. also had a unit based at Curitiba, Brazil, to study the weeds locally. Dr Harley, in 1975, imported the South American weevil called Neochetina eichhorniae, which was subsequently released in N.S.W. and Queensland. After two years it was encouraging to see some plants of the Water Hyacinth infestations along the central Queensland coast had been killed. However it is not expected that the weevil will control the weed over its whole Australian range.

A second insect, a moth called Sameodes albiguttalis, was imported form Florida, rechecked for its specifity for Water Hyacinth and released. It is now established on the weed in its expected range in Queensland and N.S.W..

Another weevil has been imported from Brazil for control of salvinia. Dr Harley and Colleagues imported from Florida the Alligator flea-beetle. In the Summer of 1977-78 20,700 adult beetles were released on various weed pockets along the Georges River. A lready mats of much weakened Alligator Weed have been washed away or sunk. A moth was also released about the same time and it is hoped the two insects will keep the floating infestations under control.

Unfortunately the weed also grows on dry land where the insects so far do not attack, so spreading by animals has to be carefully watched.

Eventually it is hoped that the insects or other means will ensure that the weeds suffer the same fate as the Prickly Pear.

Terry Collins

The Castlemaine Plant List

Have you ever wondered about what happens to the plant lists made on Club excursions?
Are the lists kept, or thrown away, or what?

The answer is that they have now been fed into a computer memory.

For a distance of about 25 km. from Castlemaine, each of the blocks of public land has been given an identifying letter. So far the letters go from A to Z and from a to p. As well as the blocks, the district has been divided into ten regions, labelled from 0 to 9, to cover land not public land.

The computer can print out a plant list for any block of land or any region. It can print this in family order or in alphabetical order, and can give only native plants, or only introduced plants, or both. It can also give a complete list of plants in the district and print out where they are found. The information given in the list is

- Scientific name and a common name
- Blocks and regions where the plant is found.
- Whether native or introduced
- Whether a specimen,photo or drawing is in the club herbarium
- Whether there has been a recent name change. An appendix gives a list of the name changes.
- Notes on occurrence, rarity etc.
- For some plants not in the herbarium, notes about who has found it, are given.

The lists are far from complete. An advantage of the computerised list is that new discoveries, or additional records can easily be added, so that we can always have an up-to-date list. Once the spelling is correct it will remain correct as the names do not need to be re-typed.

Some areas do not have any entries at all ! This gives a good opportunity for all club members to contibute some records.

Some plant statistics

Number of alien species recorded	219
Number of native species recorded	470
Total number of species recorded	689
Total number of block records	3761
Number of species recorded in only one block	230.

The last figure is interesting. It suggest that some plants are rare, and that large areas of bushland are necessary for the conservation of a wide range of species.

Further surveys could reduce this figure by finding more localities, or perhaps, find more one-locality species and increase the figure. #

The Castlemaine Top Forty

Which are the most common plants near Castlemaine?

The new computer plant list gives the distinction of being the most commonly recorded plant to the Black-anther flax-lily, with 29 records.

The top forty, with number of records is:-

1.	Dianella revoluta	Black-anther flax-lily	29
2.	Eucalyptus goniocalyx	Long-leaf box	28
	E. macrorhyncha	Red stringybark	28
4.	Gonocarpus tetragynus	Common raspwort	27
5.	Eucalyptus polyanthemos	Red box	26
	Pimelea linifolia	Slender riceflower	26
	Briza maxima	Shell grass	26
8.	Acacia armata	Hedge wattle	25
	Eucalyptus melliodora	Yellow box	25
10.	Hydrocotyle laxiflora	Stinking pennywort	24
	Cassinia arcuata	Coffee bush	24
	Cerastium glomeratum	Chickweed	24
	Hardenbergia violacea	Purple coral-pea	24
	Acacia acinacea	Gold-dust wattle	24
	Exocarpus cupressiformis	Cherry ballart	24
16	Hypochoeris glabra	Smooth cat's-ear	23
	Microseris scapigera	Yam	23
	Stuartina muelleri	Spoon cudweed	23
	Hovea heterophylla	Common hovea	23
	Eucalyptus microcarpa	Grey box	23
	Dichopogon strictus	Chocolate lily	23
	Poa sieberana	Tussock grass	23
23	Drosera whittakeri	Scented sundew	22
	Astroloma humifusum	Cranberry heath	22
	Brachyloma daphnoides	Daphne heath	22
	Acacia dealbata	Silver wattle	22
27	Crassula sieberana	Sieber stonecrop	21
	Acacia genistifolia	Spreading wattle	21
	Acacia pycnantha	Golden wattle	21
	Tetratheca ciliata	Pink-bells	21
	Anguillaria dioica	Early nancy	21
	Lomandra filiformis	Wattle mat-rush	21
33.	Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle	20
	Senecio sp	Purple-leaf fireweed	20
	Crassula decumbens	Spreading stonecrop	20
	Drosera peltata	Pale sundew	20
	Acrotriche serrulata	Honey pots	20
	Grevillea alpina	Cat's claws	20
	Glossodia major	Wax-lip orchid	20

#

V. F. N. C. A.

VICTORIAN FIELD NATURALIST CLUBS ASSOCIATION.

DON'T MISS THIS

LABOUR DAY ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER _ MAR 12-14TH, 1983.

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO PASS THIS MESSAGE ON TO ALL YOUR CLUB MEMBERS.

HOST CLUB MID-MURRAY
SEC. NEIL McFARLANE, PIANGIL, PH. 050 388244.

VENUE MACROPUS PARK (GEORGE HARDWICK, BOX 248, KERANG PH 054 576 222).
18 KM. S.W. KERANG.

CABINS WITH EN SUITE - OR ON SITE VANS - CAMPING.

FULL BOARD - $20.00 PER DAY (BRING TOWEL AND BED LINEN).

PROGRAM

SATURDAY, MARCH 12TH

LEAVE 10.00 A.M. MYSTIC PARK (ALL DAY EXCURSION BIRDS AND BOTANY).

SATURDAY EVENING 7.00 P.M. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING V.F.N.C.A.

RECREATION HALL, MACROPUS PARK 8.00 P.M. SLIDES, NATURE TALKS & GET-TOGETHER. SUPPER.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13TH LEAVE 9.30 A.M. FOR

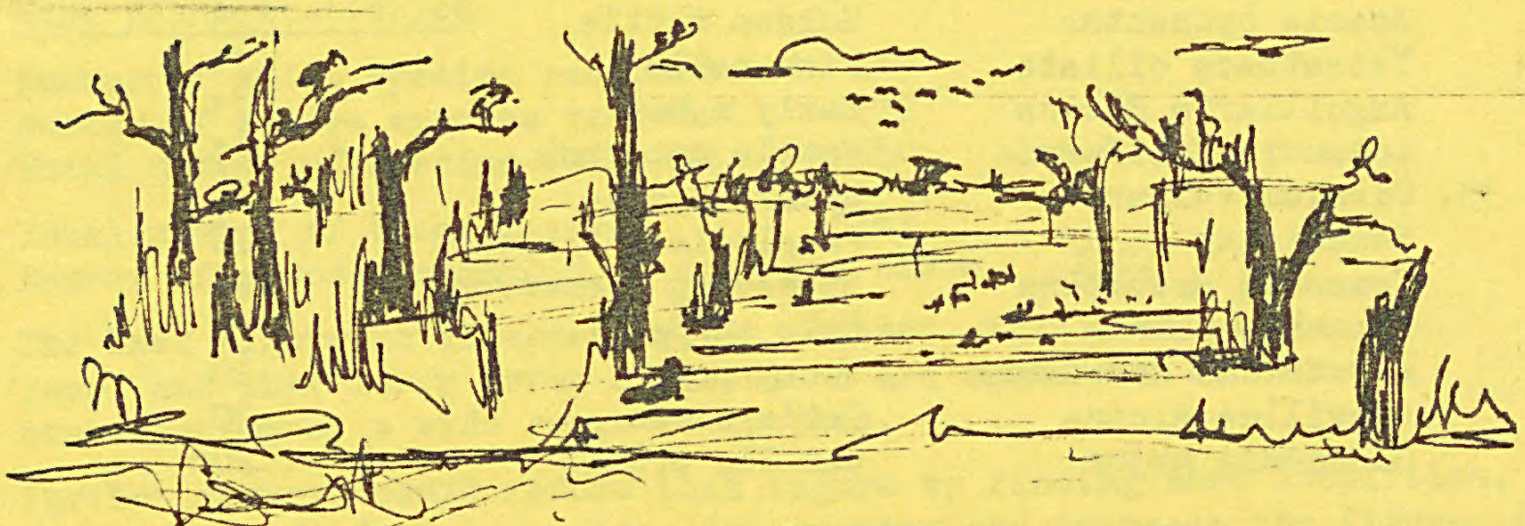
PYRAMID HILL (BIRDS, BOTANY & GEOLOGY - ALL DAY EXCURSION).

8.00 P.M. RECREATION HALL - SLIDES AND SOCIAL

MONDAY, MARCH 14TH LEAVE 10.00 A.M.

REEDY LAKE, KERANG

RETURN HOME LATE P.M.



Statement of Receipts & Expenditure

31-12-52

Receipts			Expenditure		
Credit Balance c/fwd	42	20	Printing Naturalist	116	51
Subscriptions	142	-	Room Rent	3	4
Donations	16		Affiliation Vic Field Nat 13. Bird Observers 6 Wom Vic F Nat 5	24	.
Sale of Naturalist	6	15	Cheque Book	2	76
Supper Proceeds	28	62	Tea Coffee. Biscuits	5	62
Raffle Proceeds	16	95	Trav. Exp.	5	.
Film Nights	44	.			
Bank Interest	1	60	c/f Balance Cash 20.32 Bank 95.31		
			Balance.	115	63
	297	52		297	52

F Meyer.

Accounts yet to be presented:

Printing $22-40
Room rent $56-00

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KALIMNA PARK

Join the Kalimna Park preservation Committee.

Come to the Annual meeting at the Education Centre at 8 o'clock , Tuesday February 22.

If you'd like to help preserve this beautiful area of bushland, please come along to the meeting.

CLUB PROGRAMME FOR FEBRUARY

Meeting

8pm Friday 11 Annual meeting. Election of Committee and office bearers for the coming year.

"Where Home is a Hollow". Audio-visual made in the Daylesford area by Barry Golding.

Outing

Saturday 12. Birdwatching. Leader Stan Bruton. Bendigo Ponds and Barkers Creek Reservoir. Leave Ed Centre at 1.30pm Sharp.

A LUXURIOUS HIDE

A couple of years ago a neighbour had her kitchen extended to include a glassed-in area for dining and as a sewing area, with the added bonus of a boxed in area in front of the West facing window where she grows her orchids including a Cooktown Orchid she was given to try and save. It is in bud.

The area which has brought an unexpected joy is the dining area which overlooks a lawn (well, it's usually lawn) which adjoins the bush and is planted with shrubs and trees. Birds and animals seem to be quite unaware of watchers inside and come with in 2 or 3 feet of the doors. There is a family of hares which often come down to feed and play. Birds, including spinebills, a family of Wrens, Robins, Redbrowed Finches Thornbills and pardelotes have given much pleasure over the period, and the son and daughter of the family have been trying their hand at bird photography in rather more comfortable conditions than the usual hide provides!

Rita Mills.